

CTR

COMMUNITY
TELEVISION
REVIEW \$3
FALL 1989

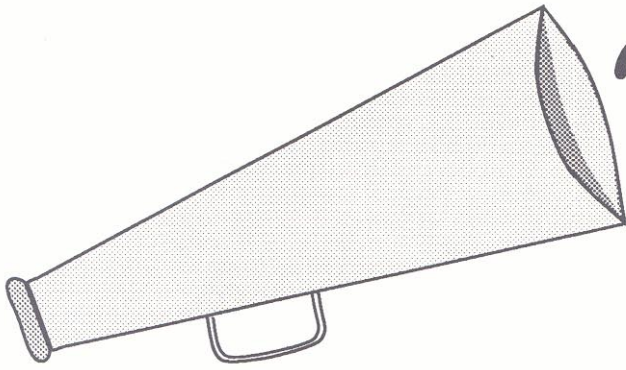
1989

*1989
Houston U.S.
Video Festival Winner*



INSIDE:

Convention News
NFLCP Senate Testimony
Access and the Act



"Call For Entries"



**ENTRY
DEADLINE**

Hometown USA Video Festival

March 9, 1990

32 Categories Can Enter Single or Series

New Category "Free Speech Minute"

Community Volunteer or Media Professional

Final Judging Hosted by
Columbus Cable Access Corporation

For information and entry
forms call or write:

Hometown USA Video Festival
c/o The Buske Group
3112 - O Street, Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95816
916-456-0757 or 456-0776



NFLCP Testifies before Senate Committee

“NFLCP members, if there was ever a time to write letters to Congress, if there was ever a time to get your access producers, cable advisory boards and other active and in contact with legislators, at all levels, *that time is now.*”

On November 16, 1989, NFLCP was called upon to testify before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Communications, chaired by Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI). NFLCP Chairperson Sharon B. Ingraham sat on a panel with Gene Kimmelman, Legislative Director of the Consumer Federation of America. The Subcommittee was holding two days of oversight hearings on the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984. The day before the hearings, Senator John C. Danforth (R-MO) released a bill (S.1880) that, among other things, calls for a return to rate regulation and the creation of low cost lifeline tiers. Because the Danforth bill was released so close to the hearing, the public record has been left open until January 15, 1990 for additional comment on the bill. The Subcommittee members were very tough on the cable industry and very sympathetic toward the city and consumer groups appearing as witnesses. Senator Inouye told the industry to expect some degree of re-regulation within the next year to year and a half.

NFLCP was given only one week's notice that we were being called before the Senate. You, the members, should be aware of the massive effort it took to create the extensive materials needed within a couple of days. NFLCP was required to submit both full written testimony, plus a written summary, at least two days prior to the hearing. A quick conference call with Sharon, Andrew Blau, Joe Van Eaton, Michael Meyerson, Gerry Field and Elliott Mitchell took place to shape the testimony. Sharon, Andrew and Joe then spent two frantic days and

nights finalizing the drafts. In the meantime, Gerry Field and Barbara Wolf were rallying the Region Chairs to get anecdotal information and letters of support from access centers files faxed, fedexed and tumbled to Washington. The response was great, and we thank everyone for their efforts. The final full testimony contained a great deal of carefully selected information to help the Senators form a full picture of PEG access operations, achievements and recognitions. Our work would not have been possible without the support and facilities provided by Spiegel and McDiarmid. We are truly grateful.

What you will read here is the 5 minute oral testimony. It combines the anecdotal approach of the full statement with the very terse summary. We know that both our presence and our statements have perked the Senators interest, and several aides have indicated that they wish to hear more about access. NFLCP members, if there was ever a time to write letters to Congress, if there was ever a time to get your access producers, cable advisory boards and other active and in contact with legislators, at all levels, *that time is now.*

Sharon Ingraham's Testimony:

Mr. Chairman—Members of the Committee—Thank you for inviting the NFLCP to appear before you today. As National Chair, I am here to discuss the effect of the Cable Act on public, educational and government or PEG access channels and to address other related issues of concern to the thousands of Americans producing and watching local access

programming. NFLCP was founded in 1976 to promote the growth of community access to cable television.

Public, educational and government channels are those cable channels set aside for community use, available to everyone on a non-discriminatory basis, usually for no charge.

In 1984, Congress recognized the growing importance of these access channels by giving *cities* the right to *require* such channels. The legislative history recognized that public access uniquely advances Congress's interest in localism... diversity and free speech. These community channels also help ensure that the operator does not have a monopoly on the electronic speech reaching a community.

Everyday citizens are producing programs with vitality, meaning and irreplaceable value to their communities, for example:

Bob Smith, a developmentally disabled public access producer from Palatine, Illinois, who is one of many with mental or physical challenges who have learned to produce their own access programming through PROJECT VITAL. The Executive Director of PROJECT VITAL tells us that at least 30 people from PROJECT VITAL are now employed and living independent from institutions. One such individual had been in an institution for 30 years.

Charlotte Wilson, from Waycross, Ohio, a retired social worker who produces a weekly series focusing on the needs of housebound seniors. Access provides critical services to such housebound seniors, who have no other ready source of information.

And how about the kids at Germantown High School in Tennessee, who produce the award winning Germantown News and Views. Access is one of the few places where high quality children's television can be found. Television not only made for children, but by children. We are

Continued on page 10 ➡

Delegates Approve Recommendations to Congress to Strengthen Access Support

Delegates to the NFLCP's national convention in Dallas this summer approved two significant public policy-related items that will be affecting NFLCP business all year long.

The delegates unanimously approved six recommendations that would improve conditions for access around the country. The recommendations were based on proposals that the national Board had developed after an assessment of the problems that many access operators face as a result of the certain portions of the Cable Act.

The Delegates approved the following recommendations:

- o Section 611 should be modified to ensure that access is available in all cabled communities.
- o Section 622 should be modified to ensure that franchise fees are used for cable related purposes and that cable operators can be required to fund access center operations at levels adequate to meet community needs.
- o Section 611 should be clarified to ensure that access is available to all members and interests in a community, not just select groups or institutions.
- o Section 639 should be modified to exempt cities and access corporations from content liability for access programs, extending the exemption now enjoyed by cable companies.
- o Section 602(2) should be expanded to include access channels as part of the most basic tier of cable service so that their unique local service is available to every subscriber.
- o Section 623 should be modified so

that rates may again be regulated; access channels, no less than local broadcast stations, should be available to everyone in a community at a reasonable cost. Each recommendation responds to a specific problem or issue that the Board and NFLCP members had identified. For example, some cable systems have no access channels at all, while in others, access is provided for municipal or educational use, but not for the community at large. The Delegates called for changes to Section 611 in order to ensure that access is available in cabled communities, and that it is available to all.

Many members have found that the franchise fee provisions of the

often administer access channels, both have been threatened with suits for access programming for which the access producer, not the city or access center, is responsible. Under current law, however, only cable companies are explicitly exempted from content liability for access programs. The Delegates suggested that Congress clarify that portion of the Act so that responsibility for the programs clearly rests with the producer.

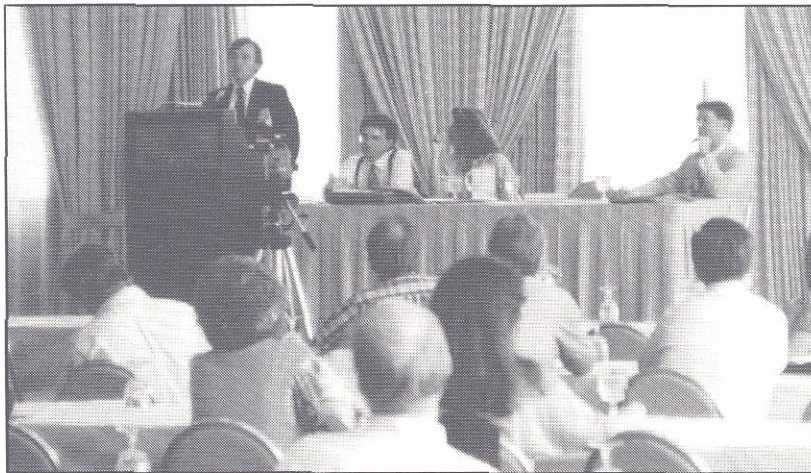
The Board urges NFLCP members to write to their Washington representatives to let them know about our recommendations for strengthening the conditions for access.

The Delegates were also unanimous when they voted that the top priority for the 1990 convention, to be held in Washington, D.C., would be advocacy for access, and that the convention's theme, curriculum and promotional material reflect that priority. A special ad hoc committee was formed to plan the curriculum, and is already putting together workshops, speakers and keynot-

ers to make sure that NFLCP capitalizes on the opportunity to bring hundreds of access supporters from around the country to Washington next summer.

Taken together, the Delegates' recommendations to Congress and the call for a priority on advocacy have the potential to significantly strengthen access across the country and in each of our cities and towns, as well as create additional enthusiasm and awareness in the NFLCP. We should be looking forward to an exciting and challenging year ahead.

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Nick Miller speaks out in public policy session.

Cable Act make it difficult to ensure adequate support for access in new or renewal franchises. The 5% cap on franchise fees, in conjunction with the language that allows the fees to go for unrestricted city uses and forces access operating funds to be deducted from the limited fees, has already caused significant threats to access funding in cities both large and small. The Delegates recommended that Section 622 be modified to reflect this experience and guarantee adequate operating support for access.

Cities and access centers, which

NFLCP Insider's Guide

Message From the Chair



Sharon Ingraham
NFLCP Chair

I sometimes wonder if being involved in access is something like being on a roller coaster. The past couple of weeks have been marked by some real highs and lows. Hopefully, you all saw the U.S. News and World Report issue dated October 16, which featured a two page spread on public access, with some good statistics on viewership and a fine perspective on access as participatory from the ground up. Access in Boston also celebrated its 6th anniversary with a live cablecast from City Council Chambers. Even as those good things were happening, the State of Massachusetts was (and

is) considering raising its allowable franchise fee to 5% (it's currently capped at about 0.25%). The problem is that the State will take 1/3 of the franchise fee, cutting many access budgets by 30% or more. NFLCP in Massachusetts took the lead to inform access leadership throughout the state, call legislators and present testimony at the Statehouse. As of this moment, the outcome is uncertain.

The point of this discussion is that NFLCP played a significant role in each of the above, whether providing information, organizing or speaking. It is the NFLCP network of individuals and organizations that allowed for rapid mobilization within Massachusetts. It is the NFLCP network that provided the framework and substance for the article in U.S. News and World Report.

As we work slowly and carefully to restore and expand service levels to members, please keep in mind that it is our network and fellowship that is the most meaningful service provided by NFLCP. That fellowship is the springboard for all public policy, advocacy, convention programming and publications.

Your participation in chapter, regional and national gatherings begins, strengthens and renews the ties we share in local cable programming. As we move into another active year, I urge you all to take advantage of what NFLCP offers. As busy as each of us is, volunteering time and energy toward activities and member development will benefit us all in the long run. As we found out, these past two weeks in Massachusetts, our ties to each other may prove invaluable. CIR



Hometown Awards Night—Ballet Folklorico Hispano de Dallas

NATIONAL CONVENTION NEWS

Conventioneers Were Hootin' and Hollerin' in Dallas

Over 500 cable access folks gathered in Dallas last July for the 12th annual NFLCP Convention. About 36% of those in attendance were Public Access Managers or Staff, 13% were Access Corporation board members, 10% were from the Telecommunications Industry and 8% listed themselves as independent producers.

Registration numbers indicate a surprising winner in the state with the most attendees. It was Minnesota with 45, followed by the host state of Texas with 44, California with 38, New York and Ohio with 37 each and then Michigan with 33. What's up with Access in Minnesota? Sixty-two percent of respondents said they had attended at least one prior NFLCP conference, the other 38% were attending their first one.

In an attempt to give you a taste of what those in Dallas thought of the conference, we thought we would reprint some of the actual comments written on attendee's survey sheets.

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH AS THEY SAY...

The best feature of the conference was...

- Meeting and discussing with peers the range of topics that were offered
- The Hotel
- Organized trips to other access centers
- Helpful Dallas Volunteers

Continued on page 6 ➡

Cox Honored for Service to Handicapped

By Linda Haugsted

Los Angeles—Cox Cable San Diego and the Sacramento Community Cable Foundation have been honored by the California Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped for cablecasting and financially supporting public access programming which positively portrays the handicapped.

Cox was honored for outstanding contribution by a corporation or individual. The cable foundation received a special award. Competition for the awards was not limited to cable programmers.

Other awards in the high-profile ceremony recently at the Directors Guild of America Theater went to *Rain Man*, *TV 101*, *Designing Women*, *Duet*, *20/20* and the CBS TV movie *Bridge to Silence*.

Individual awards were given to former presidential press secretary James Brady and California Angels pitcher Jim Abbott.

Cox was honored for its coverage of the *NFL Ski Race for the Disabled* and its practice of producing public service announcements, to be run by itself and local broadcasters, on behalf of support groups.

According to R. David Smith, public access coordinator for the San Diego system, Cox covered the ski race for the first time last year. A charitable event originating from the Purgatory, CO ski area, it features an NFL star, two able-bodied skiers and one physically challenged skier per team in competition.

Smith added that the cable system also participated in sponsorship of the La Jolla Arts Festival to raise funds to send a disabled skier to the race. The system hopes to cover the event again, he said.

Smith, who is missing his left arm below the elbow, also represents the cable company at 25 to 30 lectures a year he gives in local schools, teaching students etiquette in dealing with the handicapped. He added that members of the Performing Arts Theater for the Disabled work in the public access program.

Cox' work was submitted for recognition by local activists and Smith said the cable employees were surprised by the honor.

"We thought it would go to someone from L.A.," he said.

Randy Van Dalsen, executive director of the Sacramento Community Cable Foundation, was a little less surprised by his organization's award. The program, *A Gift to Sacramento: The TLC Graduating Class* has already won multiple local access program awards, as well as a national Community Action Network award.

The 15-minute emotional mini-documentary covered the first graduation class of the area's Transitional Living Center, where disabled people are taught the skills they need to leave institutional living and become independent.

It was produced by Frances Gracechild, the executive director of the center and a board member of the cable foundation. The foundation provided grant funds to produce the documentary and production facilities, and the program was cablecast by Sacramento Cablevision.

Van Dalsen said he was proud of the awards the foundation's programming has won, especially in light of the tenuous nature of the group's financing. As the result of a successful legal challenge of the franchise structure in Sacramento, the Scripps Howard Broadcasting Co. system there applied for and received relief from its public access obligations. It paid a lump sum to the regulating authorities which now in turn is funding the foundation. However, the foundation's funding has barely been increased in two years and financial pressure could cause diversion of the access funds to more pressing needs.

"We're on a year-to-year basis. We've been figuring out more fund raisers and we'll try to keep cranking out awards," he said.

Reprinted with permission from *Multi-channel News*, Nov. 20, 1989.

Hootin'...Continued from page 5

- Public Policy discussions
- The Longhorn Party
- Grass Roots Room
- Financial Statements given to Delegates
- Session with Meyerson, Van Eaton and Miller on Public Policy and negotiations. Free and qualified legal advice.
- Production tracks
- EEO
- The mints on the beds
- The Deep Dish booth
- Number of international guests (12)

What I liked least about the conference was...

- Scheduled instructors did not show
- Not enough free time between events
- The sessions had nothing to offer anyone who has been in the business for more than 4 years.
- Price
- \$\$\$ Hotel
- Bus rides to off-site events
- Production workshops
- Late night scheduling combined with early morning events
- Dallas in July
- No inspirational Keynote Speaker
- Registration process
- Hometown awards were too long
- No educational tracks

Ideas for future improvements...

- Offer an Educational track next time
- Find hotel that has lower cost services within walking distance
- Confirm ALL speakers
- Map to local low-cost food spots
- More minorities giving workshop lectures
- More diverse speakers
- Hometown Awards ceremony production was so derivative of conventional broadcast awards. Can't we practice what we preach?
- Smaller groups at each session
- No small groups
- Sessions for 'long-time' NFLCP'ers
- A more action-oriented approach on the model of Globescope Conference, where a plan for action and goals come out rather than just getting a lot of information and conversation.

The NFLCP has put together a Blue-Ribbon Panel to work on content for the 1990 conference in Washington D.C. See ya'll there in July. CTR

That Answering Machine!

By Reginald Carter

Where are you? —click. . . It is now 1:30 Eastern Standard Time and you are not there —click! . . . This is the third time I called and I am tired of talking to this machine —click. This is a typical response to the answering machine at the National office. There is a reason for the answering machine. You know that the National office is severely understaffed. The answering machine helps us serve you better. I would like to reassure you that I do return all messages left on the machine. The needs of the organization are so overwhelming at times and the staffing is so undermanned. I reach answering machines, but I realize that messages are important to the persons that I call. When this occurs, leave messages. I also need for you to do the same when calling me. If I cannot call you, how can I help you?

I will give you reasons the answering machine often takes messages for me. First, if I answer the phone all day I will not accomplish my work. Second, there are times when there is no part-time staff person to answer the phone. Third, I am working to meet a deadline for a project. Fourthly, I often run errands or I am helping another person on the phone.

Frankly, when the part-time staff is not in the office, I can go from one call to another without a break from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. It is frustrating to be on a complex and long call while additional calls are coming in on the other unanswered lines. I like to take time to respond to each caller.

I would like to say in defense of my machine that an answering machine was here in this office before me. (The original one has gone to see its maker.) I enjoy what I do for the NFLCP and I am only human. In future issues I will address other issues that I feel the members would like to know.

THE NATIONAL OFFICE WISH LIST

Laser or good quality printer
2—13" Color Monitors
Computer AT or compatible CTR

NFLCP Considers Forming Special Interest Groups

By Sharon Ingraham

One of the problems that NFLCP has faced for several years is how to provide tailored services to our diverse interest groups. A small national staff and limited budget have largely restricted national services to fairly broad-based offering, such as Hometown, CTR, the hotline, publications, advocacy and National Convention. Convention has provided the primary place where special interest groups have been served through tracks and workshops.

Given the diverse nature of the NFLCP, the growing interest in receiving specialized services and the need to "fire up" the membership to be more excited about being in the NFLCP, the NFLCP is considering creating a new NFLCP service: Special Interest Groups (or whatever we call them).

In a nutshell, this is how it would work:

On each NFLCP membership or renewal form, all members are given the option of joining one or more of listed "Special Interest Groups." Those groups would have an added fee. One can only join a group if regular NFLCP membership is current. Examples of SIG fees might be \$10.00/year for a Grassroots' SIG vs. \$100.00/year for an Urban Access Managers' SIG.

Revenues would provide two pools of money—half (or an appropriate amount) would go to the NFLCP to be

used for servicing the SIG members and the other half would be placed in a fund account for that SIG's activities. The primary service that national would provide is keeping track of SIG members through a modification to the existing database, tracking SIG funds and generating SIG member lists to be mailed out to SIG members.

All SIG members would be entitled to an annual mailing list of current SIG members. Funds from the SIG's half of the fees could be used to generate a SIG newsletter, educational seminars, small publication, etc.

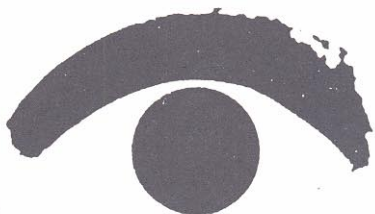
The SIG's are not meant to conflict, in any way, with the current activities and structure of the NFLCP. SIGs would have no independent policy making power. Governance must be worked out for the final proposal, but one idea is to have the SIGs meet each year at National, elect a steering committee and decide how their annual funds will be used.

We could make formation of SIGs as easy as possible. For example, if twenty members are willing to form a particular SIG, the Board approves it for addition to the SIG list.

The SIG proposal was floated before the delegates and attendees at the 1989 National Convention. Response was good, as you will see in the next report from Tom Taylor. CTR

1st Amendment Videos Available

Free copies of a First Amendment forum video are available thanks to the **Benton Foundation** and the **Chicago Access Corporation**. For more information contact:



CAC
322 South Green Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607
or phone 312-738-1400

NFLCP Announces Creation of Gilbertson Honor Roll

By Sharon Ingraham

The backbone of local programming is participation and leadership at the local level. While NFLCP has several awards that recognize achievement of a national stature, such as the George Stoney Award for Humanistic Communications, we have never had a practical way of recognizing local leadership.

In order to recognize leadership at the local level, the NFLCP has created the Gilbertson Honor Role. The honor role is named in memory of the late Peggy Gilbertson, the inspirational and dedicated director of public access in Knoxville, Tennessee. Peggy's devotion to the ideals represented by the NFLCP was outstanding, and we are pleased to recognize her memory in this way.

Later this fall, each organizational

member will receive a nomination form for the Gilbertson Honor Role. Each organizational member may nominate one person who has done outstanding service to access at the local level. It does not matter if the service was volunteer or professional, regulatory or programming. If someone has played a key role in the development of access, they are eligible for nomination.

All nominees will receive a certificate from the NFLCP and have their names entered in that year's honor roll. An early 1990 edition of CTR will carry the complete 1989-90 Gilbertson Honor Role.

Please watch your mail for the nomination form and take this opportunity to provide national recognition for our many fine local leaders in access. CTR



Get Any Lately?

Nudity, Satanic messages, bigots, the seven dirty words, candidates for elected office or other "controversial" programming usually hits the headlines whenever it appears on access. In spite of the fact that "controversial" programming is a tiny part of all the access programs produced every year, it causes nervous jitters, and, sometimes, convulsions for access managers, producers and governing bodies. The Public Policy Committee of the NFLCP has decided to do something about it. We need your help to create an educational information package on "controversial" programming for PEG access.

The Public Policy Committee is addressing these questions among others:

Controversial Programming...

- What is it?
- How do you deal with it?
- How do you prepare for it?
- Who are the people you can talk to that have been through it?

If you have dealt with controversial programming of any type on a public, education or government access channel please send as much information as possible including your policies, local press reaction and description of your process for handling it to:

Carl Kucharski
ACTV Cable 21
394 Oak Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

With your help we hope to have the educational package ready for publication by the spring of 1990. CTR

So, you live breathe and think television...Now you can wear it!



The Northwest Region of the NFLCP proudly announces the availability for national distribution of its "official" TV BOLO TIE!

Available in three color schemes (all have a black "chassis"):

Oregon Edition: Purple "screen" / Turquoise "controls"

Washington Edition: Red "screen" / White "controls"

Idaho Edition: Green "screen" / Purple "controls"

QUANTITY	EDITION	PRICE	TOTAL
	OREGON	\$15 ea.	
	WASHINGTON	\$15 ea.	
	IDAHO	\$15 ea.	
SHIPPING \$1.50 ea. (\$3.00 maximum)			
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED			

Please Print:

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Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

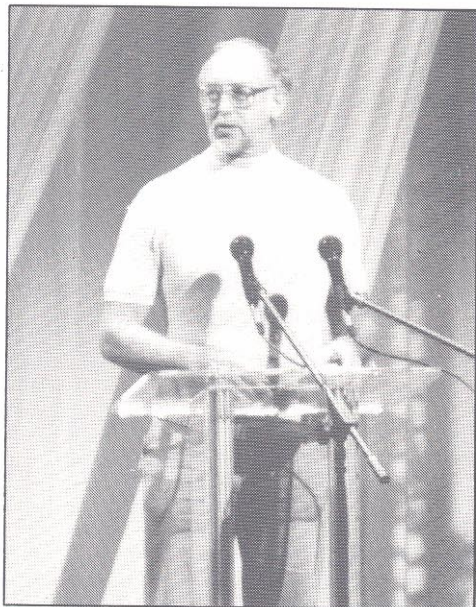
Phone _____

Hand crafted fused glass made by Oregon glass artist Carol Westlake

Make check payable to:
NFLCP-Northwest
c/o Multnomah Cable Office
1120 SW 5th #1430
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 248-3576

Please allow 30 days for delivery (but we'll probably do better than that!)

"Alternative Views," Morrow and Koning Receive Awards



Frank Morrow, George Stoney Award Winner, 1989

Frank Morrow and his long-time access series "Alternative Views" received the 1989 **George Stoney Award** in Dallas, TX in July. Morrow has not been afraid to tackle any subject on "Alternative Views," which is seen on dozens of systems nation-wide and produced in Austin, TX.

Dirk Koning was awarded the **Sue Buske Leadership Award** for his involvement over the last 10 years with the NFLCP. Koning co-founded the Michigan Chapter, has chaired Central States Region, served four years on the National Board and currently chairs the CTR Editorial Board, the Michigan Chapter and is a charter member of the Alliance For Communications Democracy.

Following are comments from Koning's acceptance speech.

I am honored and humbled by this award from friends and colleagues, many of whom are certainly more qualified to receive it than I. I am glad it carries the name of Sue Buske, who I've worked with for 10 years. Sue has spent more time and energy developing community television than anyone in this country.

She has helped launch hundreds of operations, counseled scores and even saved a few. I've seen her work effectively one on one in Grand Rapids and one to hundreds in Marne La Valle, France, last year. Thank you, Sue.

It is hard for me to accept a leadership award when I feel like such a follower. I have researched, read and studied many philosophies and styles from others. Most of you here are leaders...pioneers in this electronic evolution of free speech and individual rights. I have followed many of you, and hope to continue to listen and learn from you and with you.

I traced the origin of a couple key words the other day and was pleasantly surprised. Community and communication are similar derivatives from a Latin base word meaning to share. Communicate, share, to partake or enjoy with others; community, to share, to partake or enjoy with others.

This is what I like most about access and its people. You're not out there trying to accumulate profits...you're trying to share benefits with your community...you're not trying to withhold information to your advantage...you're sharing knowledge through community classes in visual literacy...you're not trying to acquire the competition...you're empowering the disenfranchised... you're not testing the market to see what it will bear...you're infusing it with the tools of technology. You must not underestimate your value in this post-industrial information era. Communication is a commodity...information is the currency of democracy. Don't be short sighted and hitch your wagon to the cable star. Cable may prove to be the current communications equivalent of the Pony Express and you've invested heavily in relay station stables.

Expand your vision of your access center to include access to all kinds

of information...access to radio... access to computers, desktop publishing, printing...access to bulletin boards, data banks, community fax...access in its broadest definition. Think about leading the way in community communications by establishing a user friendly and affordable infrastructure to bridge the gap between the information-rich and information-poor in your community.

Keep your channels clear of the ever-infiltrating static of censorship. How do you suppose access TV would be received and used in China?...or Poland?...or Central America?...or South Africa? We must continually guard against majority opinion usurping the rights of the minority. Remember, much of the Constitution and most of the Bill of Rights was drafted to protect minority rights. Democracy allows for majority rule but not at the expense of the rights of the individual, especially as it pertains to religion and speech.

America had a torrid tradition toward tolerance. Tolerance defined... to recognize and respect others' beliefs and practices without necessarily agreeing or sympathizing. But tolerance waxes and wanes like the moon. In America tolerance is waning. Whether you want to be or not...you in access are at the forefront of the fusion of tradition and technology. We are being called upon to defend speech principles over personal preferences.

Knowledge begets understanding... understanding begets tolerance...tolerance begets peaceful co-existence. Keep learning, keep teaching, keep defending, keep tolerating and keep peace close to your heart. You have the knowledge, the technology and tolerance...please continue to share.

Thank you very, very much.

—Dirk Koning

CTR

teaching an entire generation of children to use television as an active communications tool.

PEG Access channels have been established in nearly 2000 cabled communities and contribute over 10,000 hours a week of original programming to their hometowns.

In spite of these successes, the continued existence of these *pre-cable setting* community resources is seriously threatened and some of those threats have their roots in the Cable Act.

In spite of the valuable community service provided by PEG Access channels and programming, access remains unavailable to thousands more communities, and in others is not available on the lowest cost basic service tier.

We ask Congress to *require* that access be included in every franchise, and that PEG access be included as part of any low cost basic tier. We commend Senator Danforth for including PEG channels in the lifeline tier provisions of his cable bill. But access is not, as yet, mentioned in other proposed legislation such as must carry or telco entry.

Franchise fee provisions in the Act, particularly those operators argue, mean that cash support for operating funds must be counted as part of the franchise fee, often make adequate funding for PEG access and cable regulation impossible. Throw competition with other city budgets into the mix and this vital, community First Amendment forum is starting to come up on the losing end.

Amend the Cable act to allow for

facilities, equipment and funding sufficient to let access thrive, and make it clear that this support is not to be counted as part of the franchise fee. In addition, reconsider dedicating the franchise fee for cable related purposes only, primarily for local programming and also for regulation.

Franchise noncompliance and unreasonable modification requests are a serious threat to the existence of access. The legal costs of regulation hamper our cities' ability to enforce franchise provisions. For example, the outstanding public access center in Austin, Texas and the city sapped their limited resources to fight a modification proposal that would have wiped out their access funding and cut their access channel allotment in half.

Give our cities and towns better means to enforce franchise agreements. For example, give them the ability to impose penalties and recovery of legal expenses in enforcement actions. Strengthen the language which is supposed to protect local programming support from unwelcome modification.

In some communities, access has been selectively negotiated. For example, St. Petersburg, which recently went through renewal, chose to have only government access. You can help by clarifying the act to insure that all interests and groups within the community are entitled to use access channels.

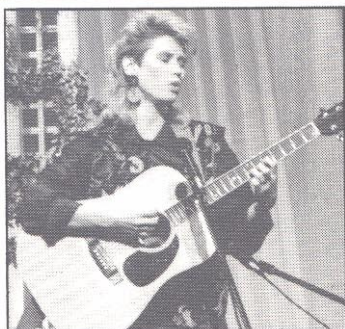
Cities and access centers, who are not allowed to edit the content of the public access channels by law, are at risk over content based lawsuits. Extend to these operators

of access channels the same freedom from content liability with the Cable Act granted cable operators.

Finally, high rates also affect access viewers by making local access programs potentially unaffordable. NFLCP joins other who feel that some measure of rate regulation is necessary to guarantee that **access channels**, as one of the key lifeline services of cable, be available to everyone in the community at a reasonable cost.

Our public, educational and government access centers have achieved something that is no less than remarkable. On budgets that would be unimaginably small for a broadcaster, we provide the training necessary to produce local programming, produce hundreds of ours of programming in local communities and every hour of public access programming represents dozens of hours of volunteer efforts. We must ensure that any community—no matter how small—has a way to use that most powerful medium—television—to express community needs and interests.

Where public, educational and government access gets the support it deserves, adequate funding, equipment, facilities and channels, the access center often produces more local programming than all its local broadcast centers combined. With the changes NFLCP has requested you to consider, here and in our written testimony, this high level of local service and diversity of information could be brought to thousands more communities. Without your help, this community resource may not survive. Thank you. CIR



Left, Sara Hickman, Hometown Awards Night. Center, Hometown Awards Reception. Right, Cathy Whiteman, Hometown Emcee.

CTR

On the cover: The Ballet Folklorico Hispano de Dallas, at the NFLCP Annual Convention in Dallas, Texas

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TIPPECANOE, INDIANA. PHOTO BY WENDY JO CARLTON

NFLCP's New Job Line

For access jobs across America, call 202-882-6128

-Membership has its reward-

A Membership in the *NFLCP* hooks you into a network of access users. Reward yourself and a friend with membership in the *NFLCP*.

Name (please print) _____

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INDIVIDUAL

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<input type="checkbox"/> 10,000 subs.	\$180
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> over 50,000 subs	\$720

Central States Supports Bulletin Board

I owe the Central States Board a giant electronic "thank you!"

In case you don't already know, they have voted to donate a significant part of Central States revenues from the past year to the continuing support of the *NFLCP* BBS. As a result, the new hard disk drive installed in September will soon be paid for, and shortly after the New Year, we will install an uninterruptible power sup-

ply on the BBS which should eliminate most of the reliability and data-loss problems the system has suffered at the hands of Illinois thunderstorms and the local power company.

Altogether, the Central States grant will cover a bit more than a years' operating expenses for the BBS (although this is being expressed in terms of hardware improvements, since they are more easily quantifiable) and will

insure the continued operation of the BBS here for many more months. I am pleased almost beyond words, and honestly couldn't believe my ears when Steve Fortriede first called me with this proposal.

My thanks, again, to Steve and the other members of the Board who were responsible for this generous act.

—Greg Smith

CTR

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TV: This instrument can teach; it can illuminate; yes, it even can inspire. But it can only do so to the extent that humans are determined to use it for that purpose. Otherwise, it is merely wires and lights in a box.

—Edward R. Murrow

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